

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8938

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3516

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTERS' RIVALRY COMES TO SYG

REF: A-1028, A-1060, A-1069

1. SYG WALDHEIM RECEIVED A LETTER ON AUGUST 27 FROM LEBANESE PM KARAMI, IN WHICH THE LATTER REMINDED THE SYG OF HIS EARLIER CORRESPONDENCE POINTING OUT THAT THE APPOINTMENT OF CAMILLE CHAMOUN AS FOREIGN MINISTER OF LEBANON IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND THAT MESSAGES FROM CHAMOUN ARE NULL AND VOID. HE ADDED THAT IN FACT ALL MESSAGES TO THE SYG AND PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON ARE NULL AND VOID UNLESS ENDORSED BY KARAMI HIMSELF. KARAMI CONTINUED IN HIS LETTER BY ASKING THE SYG TO REFUSE TO CIRCULATE AS AN OFFICIAL UN DOCUMENT A LETTER FROM CHAMOUN TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE. LETTER WHICH CASTIGATED THE PALESTINIANS AS BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR LEBANON'S CRISIS WAS CIRCULATED AS UNGA DOCUMENT (A-1028) ON AUGUST 19, TWO DAYS BEFORE KARAMI WROTE HIS LETTER OF AUGUST 21 TO THE SYG. KARAMI SIGNED HIS LETTER AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AD INTERIM.

2. KARAMI, IN A LATER LETTER DATED AUGUST 25 TO SYG

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WHICH WAS CIRCULATED AS UNGA DOCUMENT (A-1060), SET FORTH

POSITIONS TO COUNTER CHAMOUN'S EARLIER LETTER TO THE NAC.

3. IN A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT, LEBANESE MISSION CHARGE WROTE TO THE SYG ON AUGUST 30 TO TRANSMIT A NOTE FROM THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE NOTE REFERS TO ARTICLES 53 AND 54 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF LEBANON STATING THE RIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO APPOINT MINISTERS AND NOTES THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN WAS PROPERLY DESIGNATED FOREIGN MINISTER ON JUNE 16, 1976. NOTE POINTS OUT THAT PM KARAMI IN ORDER TO WRITE TO SYG GAVE HIMSELF THE TITLE OF INTERIM MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ADDS THAT THE SYG WOULD ASSUME "A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY" IF HE CIRCULATED THE AUGUST 21 MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM KARAMI BECAUSE HE WOULD APPEAR TO BE FAVORING THE PARTITION OF LEBANON. NOTE CONCLUDED THAT THE PERMANENT REP OF LEBANON ACCREDITED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC IS THE ONLY PERSON QUALIFIED TO TRANSMIT OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS ISSUED FROM LEBANON.

4. MEANWHILE, KARAMI'S AUGUST 21 LETTER WAS CONVEYED AS REQUESTED BY KARAMI TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL BEFORE THE SYG RECEIVED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOTE. THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL QUICKLY CIRCULATED THE LETTER INFORMALLY TO SC MEMBERS ONLY (A-1069). THUS RESTS THE CASE OF THE RIVAL FOREIGN MINISTERS FOR NOW. WITH LIBYA ASSUMING THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SC FOR SEPTEMBER, THE LEBANESE MISSION ANTICIPATES THE DISPUTE MAY RECEIVE FRESH IMPETUS WITH LIBYA ASSUMING A DISTINCTLY PRO-KARAMI POSITION.
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